CHAPTER XVI *

MARENGO

Surrender of Genoa — Bonaparte's Strategy — Politics at Milan — His Over-confidence — The Chosen Battle-field—Victor at Marengo — The French Overpowered — Defeat Retrieved — Desak and Kleber — A Pattern Campaign — Plots in Paris — France Conquered in Italy — Significance of Marengo — Bonaparte Returns to Paris — His Bid for Peace — Austria Disavows the Negotiations — Conferences at Lun6ville — Hostilities Renewed.

THE news of all these movements reached Melas at Turin, where, with the ordinary perspicacity of a good army general, he had expected the battle. With Suchet to the westward on the Var, and Bonaparte in front, his situation was critical. His first intention was to advance by Vercelli, and fall on Bonaparte's rear; but learning how great the force was which had crossed the St. Gotthard, he chose as a rallying-point for his army the town of Alessandria, the situation of which amid lowlands and sluggish streams resembles that of Mantua, and made it in those days of short range and weak projectiles a powerful fortress. It was his daring intention to break through the French center.

1 References as before. Thememoirsof Bourrienne are a publisher's enterprise, valuable in many places when controlled by other authorities: but for this period they are untrustworthy, as are those of Marbot. The memoirs of Antommarchi have little value except as he corroborates more authentic statements by others, uable for this period. Further, see Buffer: Quellen zu 1799-1800; Sargent: Campaign of Marengo, Relation de Neipperg; Vivenot: Thugut, Clerfayt und Wurmser; Fournier: Skizzen; Du Casse: Ne*-gociations de Lun6viUe; Bowman: Preliminary Stages of Peace of Amiens; Pajol: KM>er, sa vie, sa correspondance. Roederer's works are specially val-